

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 19034 01 OF 02 101806Z

45

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

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USIA-06 OMB-01 SY-04 USSS-00 SCCT-01 OPR-01 IO-10

ACDA-05 NIC-01 SAJ-01 BIB-01 /080 W

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R 101735Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6745

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 19034

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, GW

SUBJECT: POLITICAL TERRORISM IN THE FRG

REF: BONN 18677, STUTTGART 1046

SUMMARY: RECENT ACTS OF POLITICAL TERROR AND EVENTS
SURROUNDING THE BAADER-MEINHOF TRIALS HAVE LED TO
CONSIDERABLE SOUL-SEARCHING IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC
ABOUT POLITICAL VIOLENCE THAT GOES BEYOND THE POLITICAL
DEBATE ABOUT THE LAW AND ORDER ISSUE. ALTHOUGH THE EX-
TENT OF TERRORISM DOES NOT COMPARE TO THAT IN THE
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PAGE 02 BONN 19034 01 OF 02 101806Z

UNITED KINGDOM AND ITALY, THE FEELING OF PUBLIC IN-

SECURITY, FED BY THE MEDIA'S PREOCCUPATION WITH POLITICAL VIOLENCE, HAS GROWN SIGNIFICANTLY. HOWEVER, THE HEALTH AND VITALITY OF THE GERMAN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS COMBINED WITH A GENUINE COMMITMENT TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, WHICH IS SHARED BY POLITICIANS AND THE PUBLIC, INDICATE THAT THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC CAN WEATHER THE STORM AND PRESERVE ITS ORDERLY, DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. END SUMMARY

1. RECENT ACTS OF POLITICAL TERROR AS WELL AS EVENTS SURROUNDING THE TRIAL OF THE TERRORIST BAADER-MEINHOF GANG HAVE LED TO CONSIDERABLE SOUL-SEARCHING IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC ABOUT THE PROBLEMS RAISED BY POLITICAL VIOLENCE. THE CONSIDERATIONS GO BEYOND THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEBATE OVER THE LAW AND ORDER ISSUE (BONN 18677) AND RAISE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS BOTH ABOUT THE EXTENT OF POLITICAL TERRORISM IN WEST GERMANY AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE FOR GERMAN STABILITY.

2. THE EXTENT OF POLITICAL TERRORISM IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC DOES NOT COMPARE WITH THAT CURRENTLY EXISTING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ITALY. IN FACT, STATISTICS, RELEASED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN NOVEMBER, INDICATE THAT THE NUMBER OF TERRORIST ACTS DECLINED SLIGHTLY IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1974, COMPARED WITH THE SAME PERIOD IN 1973 ALTHOUGH NON-POLITICAL VIOLENCE INCREASED. HOWEVER, THE THREATS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE (E.G., BOMB THREATS, THREATS AGAINST PERSONS, ETC.) INCREASED 50 PERCENT DURING THAT PERIOD.

3. AT THE PRESENT TIME THERE ARE 89 PERSONS IN PRISON AWAITING TRIAL OR SENTENCED IN CONNECTION WITH ACTIVITIES OF THE BAADER-MEINHOF GANG, WHICH INCLUDE THE SERIES OF BOMBINGS IN 1972 RESULTING IN THE DEATH OF FOUR U.S. SERVICEMEN AND A NUMBER OF GERMANS. THERE ALSO EXIST SMALLER GERMAN TERRORIST GROUPS SUCH AS THE "JUNE 2ND MOVEMENT", BUT BAADER-MEINHOF REPRESENTS THE LARGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT TERRORIST GROUP IN THE FRG.

4. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE, HOWEVER, TO MEASURE THE POLI-
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PAGE 03 BONN 19034 01 OF 02 101806Z

TICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF POLITICAL TERRORISM BY THE RELATIVELY LIMITED NUMBER OF TERRORIST ACTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED. THE VULNERABILITY OF THE COMPLEX INDUSTRIALIZED GERMAN SOCIETY, THE GERMAN EXPERIENCE WITH VIOLENCE IN POLITICS DURING THE PERIOD 1918-1945 AND THE AMOUNT OF MEDIA COVERAGE DEVOTED TO POLITICAL VIOLENCE, UNDERSCORE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PHENOMENON -

5. THAT A SMALL GROUP OF FANATIC TERRORISTS CAN PLAY
HAVOC WITH HIGHLY DEVELOPED, INDUSTRIAL/TECHNOLOGICAL
SOCIETIES HAS BECOME AN ACCEPTED-
FACT OF LIFE IN THE 1970'S. BAADER-MEINHOF MEMBER,
HOLGER MEINS' WILLINGNESS TO STARVE HIMSELF TO DEATH
FOR "THE CAUSE" WAS PROOF THAT THE GERMAN TERRORISTS
ARE SERIOUS AND DEDICATED, AND TOGETHER WITH THE MURDER
OF BERLIN JURIST DRENKMANN LED MANY TO FEAR THAT THE
COUNTRY WAS ABOUT TO EMBARK ON A NEW WAVE OF TERRORISM.
ALSO IMPORTANT, IN PSYCHOLOGICAL TERMS IS THE OBSESSION

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PAGE 01 BONN 19034 02 OF 02 101821Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 19034

OF THE GERMAN MEDIA WITH POLITICAL VIOLENCE; NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT "SELLS NEWSPAPERS" BUT BECAUSE THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN KEEPING THE ISSUE ALIVE. THE CAREFULLY STAGED "MEDIA EVENT" OF JEAN PAUL SARTRE'S VISIT TO THE IMPRISONED BAADER (STUTTGART 1046) AND HIS CALL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF INTELLECTUALS TO ENSURE JUSTICE FOR THE BAADER-MEINHOF GROUP ARE EXAMPLES OF THE EXTREME LEFT'S STRATEGY FOR BUILDING SYMPATHY FOR THE BAADER-MEINHOF GANG. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE, THE MORE SENSATIONAL PUBLICATIONS

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PAGE 02 BONN 19034 02 OF 02 101821Z

IN THE SPRINGER GROUP (WHICH WERE ATTACKED BY NOBEL PRIZE WINNER BOELL IN HIS MOST RECENT BOOK ON THOSE VERY GROUNDS) KEEP UP A DRUM FIRE OF HEADLINES ABOUT THE TERRORISTS AND TERRORIST ACTIVITIES, WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO FEED PUBLIC INSECURITY AND TO DISCREDIT THE SOCIAL/LIBERAL COALITION GOVERNMENT.

6. THE PREOCCUPATION OF THE MEDIA WITH THE SUBJECT OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AT HOME AND ABROAD, HAS SERVED TO INCREASE THE POPULACE'S FEELINGS OF PERSONAL INSECURITY -- A FEELING WHICH IS GROWING ACCORDING TO PUBLIC OPINION POLLS. SOME GERMAN ENTERPRISES FOR EXAMPLE HAVE TAKEN TO INSURING THEIR TOP EXECUTIVES AGAINST TERRORISM, AND THREATENING PHONE CALLS ARE BECOMING MORE COMMON IN THE LIVES OF BUSINESSMEN, OFFICIALS AND EDUCATORS. THE OFFICIAL REACTION AS TO HOW TO DEAL WITH THE TERRORISM PHENOMENON ILLUMINATES THE GERMAN DILEMMA.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S TASK IS TO COMBAT TERRORISM AND PREVENT THE GROWTH OF PUBLIC INSECURITY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PRESERVING THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES IN GERMAN CRIMINAL PROCEDURE TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED WHICH IS A BASIC TENET OF GERMAN DEMOCRACY.

7. THE EXTENT OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC DOES NOT PRESENT AN IMMEDIATE THREAT TO POLITICAL OR SOCIAL STABILITY IN WEST GERMANY. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT NOT ONLY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LAWYERS BUT ALSO THE FDP AND THE LIBERAL PRESS HAVE RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CABINET'S PROPOSALS IN THE WAKE OF RECENT EVENTS TO CHANGE THE CRIMINAL CODE TO

COMBAT TERRORISM (E.G., REQUIRING A COURT OFFICIAL TO BE PRESENT WHEN A SUSPECT AND LAWYER CONFER). FORMER PRESIDENT HEINEMANN SAID ON TV THAT THE MAJOR BENEFICIARY OF LEFT-WING TERROR WAS THE EXTREME RIGHT AND HIS REMARKS CAN BE CONSTRUED AS A PLEA TO AVOID POLARIZATION IN THE SOCIETY AND TO ACT WITH RESTRAINT IN DEALING WITH CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BONN 19034 02 OF 02 101821Z

THE PROBLEM. HARD DAYS MAY BE AHEAD, ESPECIALLY WITH THE MAJOR BAADER-MEINHOF TRIALS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE NEXT JUNE IN STUTTGART AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF TERRORIST ACTIONS DURING THE TRIAL. THE -TEST FOR THE GOVERNMENT- WILL BE TO CARRY OUT AN ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN TO FIND AND PROSECUTE TERRORISTS WHILE RESISTING PRESSURES TO WEAKEN THE TENETS OF JUDICIAL DUE PROCESS. THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT THE RESPONSIBLE GERMAN POLITICAL LEADERS WILL DO LESS. THE HEALTH AND VITALITY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, UNLIKE THE SITUATION EXISTING DURING THE WEIMAN REPUBLIC, PROVIDE A STRONG POLITICAL FOUNDATION FOR GERMAN LEADERS TO ACT RESPONSIBLY AND TO PRESERVE THE DEMOCRATIC AND ORDERLY NATION THEY HAVE STRIVED SO HARD TO CREATE.
HILLENBRAND

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